American industries have done. This step has benefitted these countries by transferring military technology culture to civil industry.

(b) Civil industry can vavail the technologies and expertise available at the defence laboratories not only for producing items required for defence but also for using the know-how for producing civil products as well. The availability will of course depend upon the present load experienced by the particular laboratory.

(c) Does not arise.

[*English*]

Indo-German Advisory Group

3821. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have set up any Indo-German Advisory Group to evolve formula for aid ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Non-Encashment of Letter of Credit.

3822. SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL:
SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the exporters to the erstwhile Soviet Union are facing difficulties due to non-encashment of letters of credit;

(b) whether the Government have rejected the plea of exporters for encashment letter of credit;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps the Government propose to take to remove the difficulties of exporters and to arrange for the outstanding payments to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d). Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Reserve Bank of India was constrained to hold in abeyance operations of the accounts in India of the Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of USSR. Consequently, reimbursement of payments to exporters was stopped on 27.12.91. This resulted in some degree of uncertainty in the export climate to Russia. Subsequently the following arrangement were worked out to facilitate payments in respect of trade commitments already made by Indian exporters. The Reserve Bank of India agreed to settle the replenishment claims from authorised dealers in India, maintaining the accounts of the Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of USSR, in respect of (i) goods shipped upto 31st December, 1991; (ii) goods shipped after 31st December, 1991 but not later than 31st March, 1992, against Letters of Credit already opened by banks in the erstwhile Soviet Union and advised to the Indian exporters upto 31st December, (iii) payment due to India project exporters upto 31 December, 1991 and duly certified for payment by the employers.

[*Translation*]

Restructuring of Central Board of Excise and Customs

3823. SHRI RAJESH KUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Board of Excise and Customs is being restructured:

(b) if so, the salient features of the proposed restructure scheme:

(c) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard; and

(d) the extent to which this restructuring is likely to benefit the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

[*English*]

ASEAN Summit

3824. SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a summit of Association of South East Asian Nations was held at Singapore during the last week of January, 1992;

(b) if so, whether the issue of setting up of Free Trade Zone was taken up in the summit;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) th reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). At the summit, the ASEAN countries agreed to the establishment of a Free using the common effective preferential tariff scheme as the main mechanism. The time frame for establishment of the Free Trade Area is fifteen years beginning 1st January, 1993 with the ultimate effective tariffs ranging from 0-5%.

(d) Government has taken note of this development.

[*Translation*]

Export of Foodgrains

3825. SHRI GAYA PRASAD KORI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the different kinds of the foodgrains and their quantity exported during the last two years country-wise; and

(b) the amount of foreign exchange earned therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b). Rice, wheat and other cereals like Jowar, Bajra, Ragi etc. were exported from India during the last two years. A statement showing the quantity exported during 1989-90 and 1990-91 country-wise and foreign exchange earned therefrom is attached.